

BOUCHER OBTAINS MAJOR FUNDING TO EXPAND BROADBAND ACCESS IN BUCHANAN AND DICKENSON COUNTIES

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More than \$1.5 Million in Federal Funds Will Bring High-Speed Internet Services to the Haysi, Clinchco, and Fremont Communities

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□□□□□□□□□□ **(Washington, DC)** -U.S. Representative Rick Boucher announced today that at his request, the U.S. Department of Commerce, through its Economic Development Administration, is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$1,550,000 to bring high-speed broadband access to additional areas in Buchanan and Dickenson Counties. The federal funding will enable the extension of the Cumberland Plateau fiberoptic backbone from Vansant to Clintwood, bringing high-speed Internet services to business along the route of the fiber in the communities of Haysi, Clinchco, and Fremont.

"Access to affordable high-speed Internet is essential for the purpose of attracting industries seeking locations for expansion, attracting new companies with technology-based jobs, and aiding locally-owned small businesses in expanding operations. This major provision of federal funding represents another outstanding success in our effort to extend high-speed broadband access to all Southwest Virginia communities," said Boucher.

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The funding will also enable the extension of broadband service to the Lover's Gap industrial site in Buchanan County, as well as to the Dickenson County Technology Park, providing essential infrastructure to attract businesses and encourage industrial development in these locations.

The extension of the Cumberland Plateau fiber optic backbone from Vansant to Clintwood will complete a major portion of the high-speed broadband network now being deployed throughout most of the coal producing counties in Southwest Virginia. Last year construction commenced on two major fiber-optic backbone installation projects along 160 miles in Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Tazewell and Wise Counties. The project was enabled by \$3 million in federal funding supplied at Congressman Boucher's request.

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